



Wider Opportunities for Women

Testimony of Camille Cormier, Local Programs and Policy Director,

“Recovery Tracking Hearing #3-

Following the Dollars to the Jobs”

Before the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Building
and Emergency Management
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton, Chairwoman

27 October 2009

Good afternoon Chairwoman Norton and members of the Subcommittee. I am here representing Wider Opportunities for Women or "WOW," a national and local DC non-profit women's organization that works to create pathways to lifelong economic security for America's women and girls. WOW has a long and diverse history of providing such pathways to low-income women through activities promoting the employment of women in the construction trades. We were one of the first organizations in the country to provide "Green Jobs" training to women through our program at the Blue Plains Wastewater Treatment Facility in Southwest Washington DC in the 1970s. More recently WOW partnered with the Community Services Agency and the YWCA of the National Capital Area to offer the Washington Area Women in the Trades Program. We are honored and pleased to be partnering with the CSA and Covenant House DC on this new effort, the Building Futures GSA Program.

I wish to thank you, Madame Chairwoman, and the members of the Subcommittee, for making such a significant level of dollars available to put DC area jobseekers, including women, to work in construction through this funding stream.

As my colleague Ms. McKirchy of the Community Services Agency has provided an excellent overview of Building Futures GSA, I will use my limited time to put this training effort into the larger context of targeting low-income jobseekers, including women, and how best to serve them using Federal stimulus dollars through specific legislation and best practices.

Specifically, in the workforce section of the new transportation bill, WOW strongly supports Congresswoman Norton's proposal to make the training of underrepresented workers and jobseekers mandatory and increase funding from 0.5 % to 1.0 % of highway construction, transit and rail projects. We also urge you to require 30 % of the work hours on large projects be reserved for low-income people, ex-offenders, women, homeless people and minorities. And, like the Transportation Equity Network, we endorse maximizing the use of registered construction apprenticeships, project-labor, and community benefit agreements.

I'll close by thanking you, Madame Chairwoman, for the leadership role you have played in securing these funds to increase the participation rates of DC area women, minorities, youth and

ex-offenders in the local construction industry, particularly as its employment opportunities increase due to the economic stimulus package and the growth of the Green Economy. Thank you also to the Subcommittee and all of its members.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have.